WHAT THE...?
I MEAN IT, MISTER.
NOT ANOTHER STEP.
CUTE KID.
THESE ARE THE CHILDREN, RIGHT?
UH-HUH. WHERE'S YOUR MOM AND DAD...
FRANKLIN. THE BOY'S FRANKLIN--GIRL'S VALERIA.
WHERE'S YOUR MOM AND DAD, FRANKLIN?
NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.
HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYWAY.
HUSH, VAL. I'M BEIN' SERIOUS HERE.
I'M TRYING TO SCARE THEM OFF.
OH...GREAT PLAN, FRANKLIN. YOU SHOULD SAY SOMETHING TOUGH.
GOOD IDEA.
LISTEN UP, BUCKET HEADS. THIS IS THE BAXTER BUILDING HOME OF THE MOST AWESOME SUPER HEROES IN THE WORLD, AND IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, YOU'LL TURN AROUND AND LEAVE.
BUT I'M WARNING YOU--STAY, AND MY SISTER IS GOING TO GET TO WATCH ME KICK YOUR @#%&!
OOOH...YOU'RE GONNA BE IN TROU-BLE.

OKAY, ENOUGH OF THIS.
WE'LL TAKE THEM INTO CUSTODY UNTIL WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.
OH, NO YOU WON'T.
WHOA!
HEY, HEY...RELAX... WE'RE JUST DOING OUR JOBS.
YEAH, WE'RE JUST SUPPOSED TO SHUT YOU GUYS DOWN AND SERVE THIS NOTICE.
NO REASON TO GET CRAZY.
I'LL TAKE THAT.
I GUESS THAT WRAPS THINGS UP. HAVE A NICE DAY, OFFICER.
OFFICIAL NOTICE
DOES THAT THING ACTUALLY WORK?
WE COULD CALL THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION WITH IT.
HUH.
MOM AND DAD SHOULD HAVE SHOWN UP BY NOW. OR AT LEAST UNCLE JOHNNY...
...I HOPE THEY'RE ALL RIGHT.
I'M SURE THEY'RE FINE.

FANTASTIC FOUR
THE
BRIDGE
CHAPTER TWO

"I DUNNO...
"I THINK DAD MIGHT HAVE REALLY SCREWED UP AN EXPERIMENT."
"WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU THINK THAT?"
"DAD'S USUALLY PRETTY CAREFUL. BUT WHATEVER HE'S GOT WORKING IS PUTTING OUT A LOT OF EXCESS ENERGY."
"BUILDING IS GLOWY."

THE BRIDGE
COMPUTER, BEGIN SCANNING IN ACCORDANCE WITH PRE-SELECTED PARAMETERS.
THE FIRST STEP.
THE FIRST STEP TO FINDING A SOLUTION IS EXAMINING THE FAILED STATE THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CORRECT.
TO DO THIS I NEEDED TO DISSECT THE EVENTS OF THE LAST YEAR TO DETERMINE IF THEY HAD BEEN DETERRED BY, OR ACTUALLY RESULTED FROM, MY ACTIONS.
IT WAS MY BELIEF THAT TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION, I NEEDED TO COMPARE DATA FROM THIS UNIVERSE WITH SIMILAR EVENTS FROM OTHER REALITIES.
AND THAT'S ONE OF THE THINGS THIS MACHINE DOES--IT ALLOWS ME TO SEE INTO OTHER 'THENS' AND COMPARE MY 'NOWS' WITH THEIRS.
STARTING WITH WHERE I THINK EVERYTHING BEGAN TO GO WRONG...

COLLAPSED SPACE-TIME.
IT THREATENS TO TEAR OUR KINGDOM ASUNDER.
OF COURSE WE SHALL NOT ALLOW IT, BUT IT VEXES US NONETHELESS.
WHO ARE THESE PEASANTS THAT CLAMOR FOR EQUALITY?
CONSECRATED BY GOD, BRED WELL AND ADORED BY ALL *HONEST, UPRIGHT* MEN--DO THEY NOT KNOW THAT I *AM* THE LAW?
WHO DARES?
THERE IS ONE AMONG THEM, MY QUEEN. A MAN WITH AN IRON HEART AND A SILVER TONGUE.
HE TELLS THE PEOPLE--*YOUR* PEOPLE--SWEET WORDS OF DECEPTION.
HE TELLS THEM WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR.
AND WHAT IS THAT?

WE WERE ALL BORN FREE MEN.
ALL BEING FREE, WE ARE ALSO EQUAL. NO ONE OF YOU, NO ONE OF THEM ARE BETTER THAN THE OTHER.
POOR MAN ON THE STREET, QUEEN ON A HILL...THE SAME.
TO ENSURE THIS, WE MUST SUBMIT, ALL OF US, TO A RULE--A CODE--THAT ENSURES THAT ALL MEN ARE GOVERNED IN FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY.
AND HOW ARE WE TO ACHIEVE THIS?
WE WILL TALK AND DEBATE, AS ALL ENLIGHTENED MEN DO.
TO OUR OPPRESSORS, WE WILL BRING EDUCATION.

HEAR THE ANIMALS ROAR.
IT CONFUSES ME...
DO THEY NOT KNOW HOW FORTUNATE THEY ARE TO LIVE UNDER A BENEVOLENT RULE SUCH AS MINE?
WHEN THREATENED BY INVADERS FROM THE OUTER REALMS, WHO HAS MET THAT MENACE AND EASED THEIR FEARS?
AND NOW THEY TEST ME.
GOOD CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
I BELIEVE A CORRECTION IN ATTITUDE IS IN ORDER. THESE PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW THEIR PLACE.
IF I WERE BUT TO HAVE YOUR LEAVE...
YOU HAVE IT, SIR.
AND, PERHAPS, FOR THE ARROGANCE OF THEIR ACTIONS, IT WOULD BE GOOD IF THEY PERSONALLY RECEIVED THIS CORRECTION FROM THEIR QUEEN.
I'M IN A MOOD FOR ADMONISHMENT.
AND WHAT SAY YOU, CHAMBERLAIN GRIMM?
MILADY, 'TIS THE CLOBBERING HOUR.